

National Father's Return Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

I certainly appreciate the chance to participate in this resolution, which was the idea and the initiative of the Senator from Connecticut, who has so many good ideas in the area of trying to improve family values in our Nation.

So it is a pleasure for me to join with him on this resolution, to be a cosponsor of this resolution, and participate in offering it today.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. TORRICELLI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, of the 40 minutes reserved for the minority leader, 10 minutes be yielded to me and 10 minutes to Senator REED of Rhode Island. I assume that would still accommodate the Senator from Connecticut. That would leave 20 minutes.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank my friend from New Jersey. I have access to the time allotted to the Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Will the Senator from New Jersey allow the Senator from Connecticut to go forward in conjunction with this resolution?

Mr. TORRICELLI. If that is the Senator's wish.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. If it fits the Senator's schedule. I don't expect to take but 10 minutes.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, if I could amend my unanimous consent request that Senator LIEBERMAN be allowed to proceed, followed by myself for 10 minutes and Senator REED of Rhode Island for 10 minutes, and, furthermore, that Rebecca Morley, a fellow of Senator REED, be given access to the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, and a friendly amendment of 10 minutes for the Senator from Illinois named DURBIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection, with the suggested amendment?

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I further request that be amended to ask that Senator COLLINS have 10 minutes at the conclusion of the Senators who have just spoken.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. To restate the unanimous consent request, the Chair understands the request to be the Senator from Connecticut be allowed to go forward for 10 minutes at this time, followed by the Senator from New Jersey, the Senator from Rhode Island, the Senator from Illinois, and then—

Mr. GREGG. The Senator from Maine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine—each for 10 minutes, respectively.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and that Rebecca Morley, a fellow with Senator REED, be granted privileges of the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I yield 10 minutes of my time to the Senator from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

#### NATIONAL FATHER'S RETURN DAY

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, for most of us, Father's Day, which of course is this coming Sunday, is a special day of love, family, appreciation, a customary time for giving ties and, if you will allow me, for renewing ties of a different sort. But for a staggering number of American children, there will be no ties of either kind to celebrate this Sunday. The sad reality is that an estimated 25 million children—more than 1 out of 3—live absent their biological father, and 17 million kids live without a father of any kind. About 40 percent of the children living in fatherless households have not seen their dads in at least a year; and 50 percent of children who don't live with their fathers have never stepped foot in their father's home.

This growing crisis of father absence in America is taking a terrible toll on these children who are being denied the love, guidance, discipline, emotional nourishment, and daily support that fathers can provide. As dads disappear, the American family is becoming significantly weaker and less capable of fulfilling its fundamental responsibility of nurturing and socializing children and conveying values to them. In turn, the risks to the health and well-being of America's children are becoming significantly higher.

Children growing up without fathers, research shows, are far more likely to live in poverty, to fail in school, to experience behavioral and emotional problems, to develop drug and alcohol problems, to be victims of physical abuse and neglect and, tragically, to commit suicide. It is, of course, not just those children individually who are suffering but our society as a whole. Many mothers and fathers are so busy today that they are less involved in their children's lives than in the past. But this absence is particularly consequential when it comes to fathers, for they play such a critical role in socializing and providing boundaries to children, particularly to boys.

The devastating consequences of father absence for communities—and particularly urban communities—has been broadly documented in a report

released just this week by the Institute For American Values and the Morehouse Research Institute. The report was titled "Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America." It was discussed in a powerful column by Michael Kelly, which appeared in Wednesday's Washington Post.

I ask unanimous consent that the entirety of Mr. Kelly's column be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

#### A NATIONAL CALAMITY

So now we are four, as along comes Jack, 8 pounds, 4 ounces, to join Tom, who for the record welcomes this development; and now I know what my job will be for the remainder of my days. I will be the man sitting behind the driver's wheel saying: Boys, listen to your mother.

This is a good job, and one of the better things about it is the nice clarity it lends to life. Fathers (and mothers) relearn that the world is a simple enough place. They discover that their essential ambitions, which once seemed so many, have been winnowed down to a minimalist few: to raise their children reasonably well and to live long enough to see them turn out reasonably okay. This doesn't seem like a great deal to ask for until you find out that it is everything to you. Because, it turns out, you are everything to them.

We know this not just emotionally but empirically. We know—even Murphy Brown says so—that both fathers and mothers are essential to the well-being of children. Successive studies have found that children growing up in single-parent homes are five times as likely to be poor, compared with children who have both parents at home. They are twice as likely (if male, three times as likely) to commit a crime leading to imprisonment. They are more likely to fail at school, fail at work, fail in society.

What, then, would we say about a society in which the overwhelming majority of children were born into homes without fathers and who grew up, in significant measure, without fathers? We would say that this society was in a state of disaster, heading toward disintegration. We would say that here we had a calamity on a par with serious war or famine. And, if that society were our own, we would, presumably, treat this as we would war or famine, with an immediate and massive mobilization of all of our resources.

Of course, this society is our own. Of black children born in 1996, 70 percent were born to unmarried mothers. At least 80 percent of all black children today can expect that a significant part of their childhood will be spent apart from their fathers.

Millions of America's children live in a state of multiplied fatherlessness—that is, in homes without fathers and in neighborhoods where a majority of the other homes are likewise without fathers. In 1990, 3 million children were living in fatherless homes located in predominantly fatherless neighborhoods—neighborhoods in which a majority of the families were headed by single mothers. Overwhelmingly, those children were black.

These figures, and most of the others that follow, come from a report, "Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America," released to no evident great concern this week by the Morehouse Research Institute and the Institute for American Values.

As the report notes, things were not always thus. In 1960, when black Americans

lived with systemic oppression, 78 percent of black babies were born to married mothers, an almost mirror reversal of today's reality. In the 1950s, a black child would spend on average about four years living in a one-parent home. An estimated comparable figure for black children born in the early 1980s is 11 years. According to the research center Child Trends, the proportion of black children living in two-parent families fell by 23 percentage points between 1970 and 1997, going from 58 percent to 35 percent.

The disaster of black fatherlessness in America is part of a larger crisis. In every major demographic group, fatherlessness has been growing for years. Among whites, 25 percent of children do not live in two-parent homes, up from 10 percent in 1970. Overall, on any given night, four out of 10 children in America are sleeping in homes without fathers. (True, in the past few years, the number of out-of-wedlock births has begun to fall, but that trend is too nascent and too modest to much affect the situation.)

Some people think all of this matters. One is David Blankenhorn, a liberal organizer who learned realities as a Vista volunteer and who 11 years ago founded the Institute for American Values, co-author of this week's report. It is Blankenhorn's modest suggestion that fathers are necessary to children, that their abdication on a large scale is calamitous to the nation and that the people who run the nation should do something serious about this.

The man who currently runs it is not a factor here; he does not do serious. What about the men who would run it? Al Gore says nothing; he is too busy fighting the loss of green spaces in Chevy Chase. Bill Bradley preaches about racism but is silent about the ruination of a race. George W. Bush is full of compassionate conservatism, but he won't say quite what that is. And so on. History will wonder why America's leaders abandoned America's children, and why America let them do so.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I want to say just a few words on the jarring statistics from that report and column for my colleagues. Of African American children born in 1996, 70 percent were born to unmarried mothers. At least 80 percent, according to the report, can expect to spend a significant part of their childhood apart from their fathers.

We can take some comfort and encouragement from the fact that the teen pregnancy rate has dropped in the last few years. But the numbers cited in Mr. Kelly's column and in the report are nonetheless profoundly unsettling, especially given what we know about the impact of fatherlessness, and indicate we are in the midst of what Kelly aptly terms a "national calamity." It is a calamity. Of course, it is not limited to the African American community. On any given night, 4 out of 10 children in this country are sleeping in homes without fathers.

At the end of this column, Michael Kelly asks: How could this happen in a Nation like ours? And he wonders if anyone is paying attention.

Well, the fact is that people are beginning to pay attention, although it tends to be more people at the grassroots level who are actively seeking so-

lutions neighborhood by neighborhood. The best known of these groups is called the National Fatherhood Initiative. I think it has made tremendous progress in recent years in raising awareness of father absence and its impact on our society and in mobilizing a national effort to promote responsible fatherhood.

Along with a group of allies, the National Fatherhood Initiative has been establishing educational programs in hundreds of cities and towns across America. It has pulled together bipartisan task forces in the Senate, the House, and among the Nation's Governors and mayors. It has worked with us to explore public policies that encourage and support the efforts of fathers to become more involved in the lives of their children.

Last Monday, the National Fatherhood Initiative held its annual national fatherhood summit here in Washington. At that summit, Gen. Colin Powell, and an impressive and wide-ranging group of experts and advocates, talked in depth about the father absence crisis in our cities and towns and brainstormed about what we can do to turn this troubling situation around.

There are limits to what we in Government can do to meet this challenge and advance the cause of responsible fatherhood because, after all, it is hard to change people's attitudes and behaviors and values through legislation. But that doesn't mean we are powerless, nor does it mean we can afford not to try to lessen the impact of a problem that is literally eating away at our country.

In recent times, we have had a great commonality of concern expressed in the ideological breadth of the fatherhood promotion effort both here in the Senate and our task force, but underscored by statements that the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services have made on this subject in recent years. Indeed, I think President Clinton most succinctly expressed the importance of this problem when he said:

The single biggest social problem in our society may be the growing absence of fathers from their children's homes because it contributes to so many other social problems.

So there are some things we can and should be trying to do. I am pleased to note our colleagues, Senators BAYH, DOMENICI, and others have been working to develop a legislative proposal, which I think contains some very constructive and creative approaches in which the Federal Government would support financially, with resources, some of these very promising grassroots father-promotion efforts, and also encourage and enact the removal of some of the legal and policy barriers that deter men from an active presence in their children's lives.

Another thing I think we can do to help is to use the platform we have on

the Senate floor—this people's forum—to elevate this problem on the national agenda. That is why Senator GREGG and I have come to the floor today. I am particularly grateful for the cosponsorship of the Senator from New Hampshire, because he is the chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families. We are joined by a very broad and bipartisan group of cosponsors which includes Senators BAYH, BROWNBACK, MACK, DODD, DOMENICI, JEFFORDS, ALLARD, COCHRAN, LANDRIEU, BUNNING, ROBB, DORGAN, DASCHLE, and AKAKA. I thank them all for joining in the introduction of this special resolution this morning, which is to honor Father's Day coming this Sunday, but also to raise our discussion of the problem of absent fathers in our hopes for the promotion of responsible fatherhood.

Senator GREGG indicated this resolution would declare this Sunday's holiday as National Fathers Return Day and call on dads around the country to use this day, particularly if they are absent, to reconnect and rededicate themselves to their children's lives, to understand and have the self-confidence to appreciate how powerful a contribution they can make to the well-being of the children that they have helped to create, and to start by spending this Fathers' Day returning for part of the day to their children and expressing to their children the love they have for them and their willingness to support them.

The statement we hope to make this morning in this resolution obviously will not change the hearts and minds of distant or disengaged fathers, but those of us who are sponsoring the resolution hope it will help to spur a larger national conversation about the importance of fatherhood and help remind those absent fathers of their responsibilities, yes, but also of the opportunity they have to change the life of their child, about the importance of their fatherhood, and also help remind these absent fathers of the value of their involvement.

We ask our colleagues to join us in supporting this resolution, and adopting it perhaps today but certainly before this week is out to make as strong a statement as possible and to move us one step closer to the day when every American child has the opportunity to have a truly happy Father's Day because he or she will be spending it with their father.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey, Senator TORRICELLI, is recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Thank you, Mr. President.

#### THE CHILDREN'S LEAD SAFE ACT

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, in our constitutional government, it is